

serves unbroken silence.

Lesson Story

The history of the time is very similar to that of the last lesson with the exception of a few of the chief persons of the Roman Empire who have nothing to do with the events of our lesson. It was a peaceful time for the the Holy Land. Nazareth, where Jesus lived with his parents was a sleepy little town with nothing to disturb its quiet. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a carpenter, and as every Jewish boy had to learn a trade at twelve years of age, it is likely that he began about this time to work regularly in Joseph's carpenter shop at Nazareth. But his parents were pious people who attended the chief feast of the Jews, the Passover, every year. Business was not allowed to interfere with this discharge of their religious duties. This time as usual they all went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, a journey of about four days on foot, and as many more were going up to the feast also, they all went together in a company.

This was probably the first time Jesus was permitted to attend the Passover, as twelve years was the age at which Jewish boys were ordinarily permitted to attend this feast. Jesus had been a thoughtful lad. His mother had led his young mind to the study of the Old Testament scriptures so that when he arrived at this age he was well acquainted with the Scriptures. Jerusalem to every Jew was the Holy City. In it their kings had reigned. There the prophets, which every Jew read and loved, had spoken and there was the glorious temple, the center of their religion. Hence, it is easy to see with what keen delight Jesus would go to eat the Passover in that city, to behold the city, situated so that it was "the joy of the whole earth" to look upon the glittering pinnacles of that holy temple, and to hear the chants of the priests as they sang the Passover songs.

How his young and impressionable nature must have been stirred by the songs which the people chanted as they traveled along from day to day! How his blood must have bounded with religious joy as he beheld for the first time from the top of the encircling hills, north of Jerusalem, the city of so many holy and sacred memories and where he himself was to yield up his life for the nation and the world.

Eight days were spent in the city in the services of the Passover. We know not how Jesus spent the days of his first Passover, but possibly as he spent some of the days after the Passover. As the days of the Passover closed, Joseph and Mary with others from Galilee started on his homeward journey. Jesus taken up with his life interest in the things of religion in Jerusalem remained behind in the city. At the close of the first day's journey they discovered the absence of Jesus, and turned back to seek him. After three days they found him in the temple. Not looking at the beauties of the building, nor at the curiosities of the city which usual-

ly attract a boy's notice, but sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. He was not, as we have sometimes been taught to believe, teaching them, but learning. His answers to their questions, however, showed deep understanding and thought. And, when Joseph and Mary found him they were amazed, amazed that he should be so interested in such things, amazed that he should give them such wonderful answers. And Mary said to him, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing,"—fearing that you had strayed away or been kidnapped. And Jesus replied in words that seem to have hinted of his future work, "How is it that ye sought me? Know ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" As much as to say, "Where else should you look for me? Don't you know that I am interested in such things? Don't you know that I have a work to do which my Father has given me to do?" Thus early Jesus seems to have felt in some dim way that he was destined to an extraordinary work on earth. But his parents did not understand the meaning of his words. But the boy went down with them and was subject to them. Tho he was divine, tho he was to be the Messiah, yet he saw that to be divine he must be obedient to those who were his natural superiors. How beautiful is this verse of the lesson! The Son of God subject to Joseph and Mary. The Savior of the world lovingly obedient to his parents. If we would be divine even in a measure, we must learn obedience and subjection. But Mary kept and pondered all these sayings in her mother heart. She must have remembered the words of the angel who announced his birth. And the last notice we have of this wonderful boy until the preaching of John the Baptist is simply, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Notice, it does not say "in stature and wisdom," but "in wisdom and stature," and not, "in favor with man and God," but, "in favor with God and man." This is the proper order in both cases. Thus closes the brief notice of Christ for the first thirty years of his life. How simple must have been that life! And yet how this little incident opens up to our vision the unfolding life of the Son of God. He was divine and yet he was human.

Some Practical Thoughts

1. Worldly business should not interfere with our religious duties.
2. Jesus as a boy is a wonderful comment on the influence of good parentage.
3. Family piety has its influence on the young members of the family.
4. The boy is father to the man in most cases.
5. Obedience is ever a sign of devout childhood.
6. Subjection to each other is a duty of those who would be Christlike. I Tim. 3: 4, I Pet. 3: 1, I Pet. 5: 5.
7. God will honor those among men who honor him.

Church News

Homerville, Ohio

Dear Brother Gnagey; in three hours from now we will be ready to write A. D. 1900. I have just arrived home from church. The congregation was not large but attentive. Our young brother E. E. Jacobs is here spending the holidays with his father, and he led the K. C. service, subject "The heavenly record," and all who heard him read his speech could not help but know that he has been learning from the great Master, as well as from his teachers of the Wooster University. May God's blessings rest on all students whose teacher is Christ. I am only writing to fulfil the promise "of being heard from once a month." If I should fail to live up to that promise what would my record be? And if I fail to get a good record in this little earthly affair, how can I expect a good record in heaven. We heard tonight from the sacred stand, that all the good there was in the world, emanated from Christ, and that if we felt like fighting our enemies, it went to prove that we are not master of self, etc.

I hope to be able to write up some news during the coming month. We need a revival, now let us get ready for it. When the roads will improve and our people will come out, our pastor will be prepared to do his part as God will be helper. So let us be ready to help our pastor in prayer and song and will, not only toward the pastor and our brethren and sisters, but toward everybody. Invite everybody to attend church, give them a warm reception, ask them to come again. And then all pray for success, pray for strength and wisdom, not only at the church house but at home and abroad and in secret. Please try it, do it in dead earnest, and see if our church can not get something worthy to report. Now not simply so as to have something to report, but let it be to the honor and glory of God and the salvation of precious souls, and the encouragement of God's children. D. J. MYERS.

North Manchester, Ind.

We closed a two weeks meeting with no accessions. Instead of a Christmas entertainment and treat we had a Christmas giving for the poor. Many hearts were thus gladdened by the distribution. The pastor and wife were remembered with a beautiful parlor lamp. This was gratefully received as a token of love.

Cerro Gordo.—We visit this place once a month. The Lord is leading on to victory. *Nappanee*.—Brothers Perry and Talley will hold a Bible meeting here during the holidays. We expect to begin a protracted meeting here the first of the year.

B. H. FLORA.

Sin, like paralysis, makes a man helpless and useless so far as God's service is concerned.

The greatest trouble of the world is not sickness of body but sickness of soul.